

REMARKS

I. Claim Amendments and Introductory Remarks

Independent claims 27, 42 and 60 have been substantially amended to expedite the prosecution of this application by including the subject matter of (now cancelled) dependent claims 28-39, 43-54 and 61-69 in independent claims 27, 42 and 60, respectively. The claimed connector, as best shown in Figure 17 of the drawings, now defines externally- and internally-threaded members (1782, 1784) and at least one circumferentially-extending raised structure (1788) that extends into a liquid-trapping chamber (1792) defined by an inner wall (1790) of the outer housing (1780) and the first externally-threaded female luer member and further defines a tortuous path (1795) with the inner wall of the outer housing for inhibiting liquid flow from the liquid-trapping chamber between the outer housing (1780) and the internally-threaded second member (1784) when the first connector member is connected to the second connector member. Applicants submit that the connector structure, as claimed and as shown in Figure 17, is not disclosed or suggested by the cited prior art.

In addition, Applicants have canceled restricted claims 1-26 without disclaimer or prejudice to presenting them in a divisional application.

II. Rejections Under 35 USC § 102(b)

1. The Office Action rejected claims 27-35, 38 and 39 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,746,979 to Holm. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 27 has been amended to define, *inter alia*, at least one circumferentially-extending raised structure (1788) that extends into a liquid-trapping chamber (1792) defined by an inner wall (1790) of the outer housing (1780) and the first externally-threaded female luer member and further defines a tortuous path (1795) with the inner wall of the outer housing for inhibiting liquid flow from the liquid-trapping chamber between the outer housing (1780) and the internally-threaded second member (1784) when the first connector member is connected to the second connector member.

Applicants submit that the container sections 1, 2 disclosed in the Holm patent do not disclose or suggest the claimed invention. Specifically, the shoulder portion 12 is not a “circumferentially-extending raised structure” that extends into a “liquid-trapping chamber” and defines a “tortuous path . . . for inhibiting liquid flow from the liquid-trapping chamber between

the outer housing and the internally-threaded second member when the first connector member is connected to the second connector member.” Instead, because the shoulder 12 is slanted it would seem to operate to readily direct any leaked fluid from the container sections 1, 2 through the gap (i.e., where shoulder 12 and tube portion 6 almost meet) formed between the tube portion 6 and the tubular portion 10 to the outside environment. (See e.g., Figure 1 and Cols. 4-5.) Thus, the shoulder 12 does not appear to either “extend into a liquid-trapping chamber” or define a “tortuous path . . . for inhibiting liquid flow from the liquid-trapping chamber between the outer housing and the internally-threaded second member”, as claimed.

Further, because the container sections 1, 2 each include a valve member 16, 22 that operates to preclude leakage of liquid therefrom (see e.g., Col. 4, lines 35-65), the Holm patent does not teach or suggest the need for a “circumferentially-extending raised structure” that extends into a “liquid-trapping chamber” and defines a “tortuous path . . . for inhibiting liquid flow from the liquid-trapping chamber between the outer housing and the internally-threaded second member.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants submit that the Holm patent does not disclose each and every limitation or element of claim 27 and the claims dependent thereon, and that the anticipation rejection based thereon should be withdrawn.

2. The Office Action rejected claims 27-39 and 42-54 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,224,568 to Morimoto. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Similar to the Holm patent, Applicants submit that the Morimoto patent does not disclose or suggest a “circumferentially-extending raised structure that extends into a liquid-trapping chamber . . . and defines a tortuous path. . . for inhibiting liquid flow from the liquid-trapping chamber between the outer housing and the internally-threaded second member.” Rather, the external flange 4 that contacts 41 in Figures 13, 15 and 20 cited by the Examiner does not extend into a liquid-trapping chamber but instead contacts and rides along wall 41.

As shown in Figure 17 of Applicants’ application, the circumferentially-extending raised structure 1788 does not contact the inner wall of outer housing 1780, but rather extends into the liquid-trapping chamber 1792. The raised structure 1788 defines a tortuous path 1795 that could still allow liquid to pass out of the chamber 1792, but is designed to make it difficult for the liquid to do so. Applicants submit that the external flange 4 of the Morimoto patent, on

the other hand, discloses a sealing-type engagement with the wall 41 and does not extend into the chamber (no reference number found) defined between the wall 41 and the flange 4.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants submit that the Morimoto patent does not disclose each and every limitation or element of claims 27 and 42 and the claims dependent thereon, and that the anticipation rejection based thereon should be withdrawn.

III. Rejections Under 35 USC § 103(a)

1. The Office Action rejected claims 40-41 as being obvious over the Holm patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,618,268 to Raines. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Raines patent does not overcome the deficiencies of the Holm patent, as explained above with respect to independent claim 27 and as set forth in the Office Action. For at least those reasons, Applicants submit that a combination of the Holm and Raines patents does not render obvious the inventions of claims 40-41, and that the rejection based thereon should be withdrawn.

2. The Office Action rejected claims 40-41 and 55-56 as being obvious over the Morimoto patent in view of the Raines patent. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Raines patent does not overcome the deficiencies of the Morimoto patent, as explained above with respect to independent claims 27 and 42 and as set forth in the Office Action. For at least those reasons, Applicants submit that a combination of the Morimoto and Raines patents does not render obvious the inventions of claims 40-41 and 55-56, and that the rejection based thereon should be withdrawn.

3. The Office Action rejected claims 27-39, 42-54, 57-69 and 72-75 as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,096,011 to Trombley, III in view of the Morimoto patent. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Trombley, III patent does not overcome the deficiencies of the Morimoto patent, as explained above with respect to independent claims 27 and 42 and as set forth in the Office Action. Specifically, the Office Action does not cite the Trombley, III patent for disclosing or suggesting a “circumferentially-extending raised structure that extends into a liquid-trapping chamber . . . and defines a tortuous path. . . for inhibiting liquid flow from the

liquid-trapping chamber between the outer housing and the internally-threaded second member.” As discussed above with respect to the anticipation rejection based on the Morimoto patent, the external flange 4 that contacts 41 in Figures 13, 15 and 20 cited by the Examiner does not extend into a liquid-trapping chamber but instead contacts and rides along wall 41. Thus, Applicants submit that the external flange 4 of the Morimoto patent discloses a sealing-type engagement with the wall 41 and does not extend into the chamber (no reference number found) defined between the wall 41 and the flange 4.

For at least those reasons, Applicants submit that a combination of the Trombley, III and Morimoto patents does not render obvious the inventions of claims 27-39, 42-54, 57-69 and 72-75, and that the rejection based thereon should be withdrawn.

4. The Office Action rejected claims 40-41, 55-56 and 70-71 as being obvious over the Trombley, III patent in view of the Morimoto patent in view of the Raines patent. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Raines patent does not overcome the deficiencies of the Trombley, III and Morimoto patents, as explained above with respect to independent claims 27, 42 and 60 and as set forth in the Office Action. For at least those reasons, Applicants submit that a combination of the Trombley, III, Morimoto and Raines patents does not render obvious the inventions of claims 40-41, 55-56 and 70-71, and that the rejection based thereon should be withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

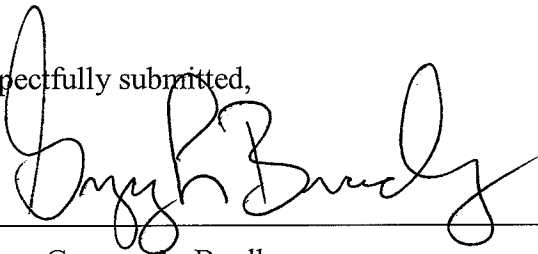
In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the cited references individually or in combination fail to teach or suggest the claimed inventions set forth above. Reconsideration of all the rejections is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding any of the foregoing or wish to discuss this application in further detail to advance prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

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Respectfully submitted,

By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory L. Bradley", written over a horizontal line.

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